

They'll be willing to be crammed in the bottom of 18-wheelers. They fall prey to these *coyotes* who smuggle human beings to achieve profit.

When I say the system hadn't worked, the system hadn't worked to enforce our borders like we want. But the system was—also fostered illegal operations that prey upon the human being, and it's not in this Nation's interest that that continue to happen.

And finally, this bill goes to the heart of our values. We have proven that our Nation is capable of assimilating people. And I'm confident that we can continue to be a nation that assimilates. The bill recognizes that English is a part of the assimilation process and wants to help people learn the language in order to be able to take advantage of America.

You know, I've heard all the rhetoric—you've heard it too—about how this is amnesty. Amnesty means that you've got to [you don't have to] * pay a price for having been here illegally, and this bill does [doesn't do] * that. But it also recognizes it's in our Nation's interest to bring people out of the shadows, that there's got to be a way forward that recognizes there is a penalty for being here illegally—on the other hand, that recognizes that each person has got worth and dignity.

I love a country where people come with dreams and aspirations and through hard work can realize those dreams and aspirations. I'm struck every time I hear—I'm struck about our greatness every time I hear a story about a child taking advantage of a mother's or dad's hard work to realize the blessings of America. I was at the Coast Guard Academy—I've told this story several times—and the number-one cadet talked about his migrant grandfather. The fellow was a Mexican American—or is a Mexican American. The father came from—the grandfather came from Mexico to work hard so that, hopefully, someday, somebody in his family would realize the blessings of America. And it worked.

The country is better off, our soul is constantly renewed, our spirit is invigorated when people come here and realize the blessings of America. And so the bill that

we've worked hard to craft is an important piece of legislation that addresses the needs of a failed system, that says, we're going to change for the better.

I want to thank you all for working hard. We've got a couple of days of hard work ahead of us to get the bill through the first stage of the process, and then, of course, when successful in the Senate, we'll be reconvening to figure out how to get the bill out of the House. It's an important piece of legislation. It's an important time to act for the sake of the country.

Thanks for your time. God bless your efforts. God bless our country. Thank you. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:01 a.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Memorandum on Assignment of Functions Under Section 1035 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007

June 26, 2007

Memorandum for the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Assignment of Functions Under Section 1035 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and laws of the United States, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby assign to the Secretary of Defense the functions of the President under section 1035 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (Public Law 109-364). The Secretary of State, and the heads of other executive departments and agencies identified in the report required under section 1035, should concur with the report.

The Secretary of Defense is authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

* White House correction.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:29 a.m., June 29, 2007]

NOTE: This memorandum was published in the *Federal Register* on July 2.

Remarks at a Rededication Ceremony at the Islamic Center of Washington

June 27, 2007

The President. Imam, thank you very much. Thank you for inviting me. I bring my personal respect to you, sir.

Imam Abdullah Khouj. Thank you, sir.

The President. And I appreciate your friendship. I do want to thank the governors of the Islamic Center. I welcome the Ambassadors. Thank you all for coming. I appreciate other distinguished guests who are here. It is an honor to join you at this rededication ceremony.

As the Imam mentioned, half a century has passed since one of our great leaders welcomed the Islamic Center into our Nation's family of faith. Dedicating this site, President Dwight D. Eisenhower offered America's hand in friendship to Muslims around the world. He asked that together we commit ourselves "to peaceful progress of all men under one God."

Today, we gather with friendship and respect to reaffirm that pledge and to renew our determination to stand together in the pursuit of freedom and peace. We come to express our appreciation for a faith that has enriched civilization for centuries. We come in celebration of America's diversity of faith and our unity as free people. And we hold in our hearts the ancient wisdom of the great Muslim poet, Rumi: "The lamps are different, but the light is the same."

Moments like this dedication help clarify who Americans are as a people and what we wish for the world. We live in a time when there are questions about America and her intentions. For those who seek a true understanding of our country, they need to look no farther than here. This Muslim center sits quietly down the road from a synagogue, a Lutheran church, a Catholic parish, a Greek Orthodox chapel, a Buddhist temple—each with faithful followers who practice their

deeply held beliefs and live side by side in peace.

This is what freedom offers: societies where people can live and worship as they choose without intimidation, without suspicion, without a knock on the door from the secret police. The freedom of religion is the very first protection offered in America's Bill of Rights. It is a precious freedom. It is a basic compact under which people of faith agree not to impose their spiritual vision on others and, in return, to practice their own beliefs as they see fit. This is the promise of our Constitution and the calling of our conscience and a source of our strength.

The freedom to worship is so central to America's character that we tend to take it personally when that freedom is denied to others. Our country was a leading voice on behalf of the Jewish refuseniks in the Soviet Union. Americans joined in common cause with Catholics and Protestants who prayed in secret behind an Iron Curtain. America has stood with Muslims seeking to freely practice their beliefs in places such as Burma and China.

To underscore America's respect for the Muslim faith here at home, I came to this center 6 days after the 9/11 attacks to denounce incidents of prejudice against Muslim Americans. Today I am announcing a new initiative that will improve mutual understanding and cooperation between America and people in predominately Muslim countries.

I will appoint a special envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference. This is the first time a President has made such an appointment to the OIC. Our special envoy will listen to and learn from representatives from Muslim states and will share with them America's views and values. This is an opportunity for Americans to demonstrate to Muslim communities our interest in respectful dialog and continued friendship.

We have seen that friendship reflected in the outpouring of support Americans have extended to Muslim communities across the globe during times of war and natural disaster. Americans came to the aid of the victims of devastating earthquakes in Pakistan and Iran and responded with urgency and compassion to the wreckage of the tsunami